

AD-421 ANNUAL RESEARCH PROGRESS REPORTS
Supplement to ARIS On-Line Manual
Chapter 15G

Helps

Uses

- **National Program Annual Reports** - Every year, NPS drafts an annual report for each National Program summarizing the major accomplishments of that program. The National Program Annual Reports are available at <http://www.nps.ars.usda.gov/>. At the left of each National Program (NP) statement is a link to the National Program Annual Reports for FY 1998, 1999 and 2000, etc. In addition to the summary report, each AD-421 report associated with that National Program is also available.
- **Budget Process** - Selected major accomplishments will be highlighted in our budget submission to Congress to help support our request for funding. The Status of Program section from the budget document is available on an internal web site at <http://www.npstaff.ars.usda.gov/progstatus>. It is not currently a public document.
- **Press Potential** - The Information Staff is always looking for information that might gain media coverage for ARS research. NPS identifies accomplishments that may have media potential and refers them to the Information Staff.
- **Briefing Materials** - NPS is called on constantly to provide briefing papers on a wide variety of topics to serve various purposes. Information contained in the expanded AD-421s helps meet this important staff support role to the Department.

General Comments

- **Who is the Intended Audience?** The AD-421 is not a technical document, and it should be written to be understood by our customers, stakeholders, and interested members of the general public.
- **What is an Accomplishment?** An accomplishment is 'something successfully completed.' A list of activities, a progress report, or proposed plans isn't the same as an accomplishment.
- **What is the Proper Length?** The length of the AD-421 is not, in itself, an issue. Length limitations aren't imposed but unnecessarily long project reports defeat the purpose of this process. Reasonable self-regulation in deciding how much information and detail to include in the report is expected.
- **How are Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Protected?** The problem of protecting intellectual property rights in a public reporting process such as this one is understood. But, an AD-421 that basically says we cannot

tell you anything about our work because it might jeopardize an intellectual property right is not acceptable. **If the scientist believes he/she has made a patentable invention or may have a future patentable invention, he/she must consult with the patent advisor to review the written description of his/her research results to avoid making a disclosure.** The Agency needs to know, and the public has a right to know, what research is being accomplished with the funds made available. With careful drafting, a meaningful annual report without disclosing IPRs can be completed. If an accomplishment is withheld to protect IPRs, make sure that accomplishment is reported in the first project report after the patent application has been filed by ARS at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

- **Avoid Including "Sensitive" Information.** Whenever possible, discussion of potentially sensitive information, such as strategies for resolving international trade disagreements, recommendations of specific agro-chemicals, or not yet fully developed approaches for solving some potentially controversial issues, should be avoided. If "sensitive" information is included in the AD-421, alert the Area Office for a special review.
- **Public Document - unless otherwise indicated, assume that all of the information given in the AD-421 will be made public.** Avoid technical or other terminology that might not be easily understood by our customers, stakeholders, and interested members of the general public. Do not use an acronym unless it's spelled out the first time it is used.

Questions

1. What major problem or issue is being resolved and how are you resolving it?

NOTE: Once developed, the answer to this question can be used each year during the life of the project with only minor editing as needed.

- ✓ Provide a concise overview of the problems and objectives being addressed.
- ✓ Explain the approaches used to resolve them.

2. How serious is the problem? Why does it matter?

NOTE: Once developed, the answer to this question can be used each year during the life of the project with only minor editing as needed.

- ✓ Explain to whom the research is relevant/the potential impact.

3. How does it relate to the National Program(s) and National Program Component(s)?

NOTE: Once developed, the answer to this question can be used each year during the life of the project with only minor editing as needed.

- ✓ Identify the NP(s) and percentage(s) the project is specifically coded to support.
- ✓ Describe, in one or two sentences, how the research supports that National Program(s) and its components.
- ✓ Provide, if the research contributes to National Programs other than the one(s) it is specifically coded to support, a brief description of the

significant interactions.

- ✓ Identify and very briefly describe any other projects, both ARS and extramural cooperative projects, worked on collaboratively, to achieve these objectives.

4. What were the most significant accomplishments this past year?

- ✓ THIS FORMAT IS REQUIRED IN PREPARING BUDGETARY DOCUMENTS JUSTIFYING OUR REQUESTS FOR APPROPRIATIONS. It is in the project's interest to have its accomplishment recognized and used in a timely manner. Do not rely on the National Program Teams' familiarity with the work to assure proper recognition.
- ✓ For "new" or "bridging/interim" projects, briefly capture the work and accomplishments of the previous year, thus providing a sense of history and continuity unless that work is included in another (close-out) AD-421. If the work is truly new and does not build on an earlier project or if the work has been redirected into new areas, a brief explanation can be inserted here.

NOTE: Write accomplishment in a four-sentence paragraph, with one sentence addressing each of the following questions, in this order:

A. Single Most Significant Accomplishment:

- ✓ Why did we do the research?
- ✓ What was done and where (include collaborators/cooperators, if any)?
- ✓ What was the specific accomplishment in the FY reporting period?
- ✓ What was (or could be) its impact, outcome, etc.?

B. Other Significant Accomplishment(s), if any.

- ✓ For additional significant accomplishments reported, follow the format described in 4A.

C. Significant Accomplishments/Activities that Support Special Target Populations.

NOTE: 1) If there are no accomplishments to report here, state "none."

2) Use no more than 10 lines of text.

- ✓ **Report here only** if there are specific accomplishments, activities, or special outreach efforts that directly benefit the target populations (small farms - defined as under \$250,000 annual gross receipts; or "socially disadvantaged/limited resource" producers).

D. Progress Report

NOTE: OPTIONAL FOR ALL IN-HOUSE [D] PROJECTS; MANDATORY FOR SIBLING [R,S,T,G,C] PROJECTS

For inhouse projects:

- ✓ Briefly describe progress of any significant milestones, or other important information achieved (no reporting of activities occurring before 10/1/01) to report to the National Program Team and the public.

FORMAT: Succinct header followed by no more than 10 lines of text.

For Sibling Projects:

- ✓ For all subordinate projects with the exception of certain projects that require AD-421s, only **Question 4D** will now be required. All of the other questions are optional. In Question 4D, a progress report of the project over the last year will be sufficient. A reference to the

associated inhouse parent project must be included. Although the length of Question 4D is unlimited for subordinate projects, the report should be concise.

- ✓ The progress report should begin by stating who the project is with (the outside organization) and what inhouse project it is associated with, including project number and project title (Example: "This report serves to document research conducted under a reimbursable agreement between ARS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additional details of research can be found in the report for the parent project 6225-12320-001-00D Soil Erosion Research.")
- ✓ Major accomplishments of the subordinate projects (accomplishments at the level where they are candidates for inclusion in the National Program Annual Report, the budget, and/or GPRA documents) should be captured and reported in the parent project's AD-421, with credit as appropriate (e.g., cite work of cooperator).

5. Describe the major accomplishments over the life of the project, including their predicted or actual impact.

- NOTE:** 1) The "life of the project" refers to the duration of the current project.
- 2) Once developed, the answer to this question can be used each year during the life of the project with only minor editing to include recent accomplishments as needed.
- 3) Do not include accomplishments described in Question 4.
- 4) For "new" or bridging" projects, briefly report the work and accomplishments of the previous project, thus providing a sense of history and continuity. If the work is truly new and doesn't build on an earlier project or if the work has been redirected into new areas, insert a brief explanation here.

6. What do you expect to accomplish, year by year, over the next 3 years?

- ✓ GPRA requires ARS to submit an Annual Performance Plan (APP) each year with its budget request. The APP lays out a number of significant accomplishments/outcomes which the Agency expects to achieve with the funds requested. The APP looks ahead for 3 years. The NP teams will review the anticipated accomplishments identified in the AD-421s and select the ones that will be used in the APP. Not every project will have a significant accomplishment every year and NPS recognizes the difficulty of predicting future research outcomes, but if able to do so, it will assist NPS in developing the GPRA APP.
- ✓ Identify anticipated accomplishments for each of the next 3 fiscal years.
- ✓ If the projected accomplishments reported last year or the year before need to be updated, revise them and include a brief explanation of why the change(s) was necessary.

7. What science and/or technologies have been transferred and to whom? When is the science and/or technology likely to become available to the end-user (industry, farmer, other scientists)? What are the constraints, if known, to the adoption and durability of the technology products?

NOTE: See the general comment on the following page regarding Intellectual Property Rights.

- ✓ What knowledge, cultural practices, technologies, etc., have been transferred to potential users during the FY?
- ✓ Identify more tangible accomplishments such as CRADAs, licenses, patents, field days, and other formal steps that have been taken to put information in the hands of users.
- ✓ **Do not** list activities or publications.
- ✓ **Do not** include the names of individuals or corporations to whom technology has been transferred; identify them using terms such as producers, other scientists, consumer organizations, processors, shippers, etc.

8. List most important publications in the popular press and presentations to organizations and articles written about the research.

NOTE: This does not replace peer-reviewed publications listed in Question

9. Peer-reviewed publications in scientific journals and major presentations to scientific or professional organizations should be entered under Question 9.

- ✓ Enter only non-peer-reviewed publications.
- ✓ Enter items in this section only once, in the year they were published or presented.
- ✓ Enter only the most important items.

9. Scientific Publications.

NOTE: Only enter those publications that have been printed and have not been included in previous annual reports.

- ✓ Enter peer-reviewed publications and major presentations (abstracts) to scientific and professional organizations in this section that have an approved ARS-115 Manuscript Approval.

Format for Scientific Publications

Standard citation format for journal articles as follows: The citation must include the following information in the same sequential order:

- ✓ Author(s) [Surname, First Initial, Middle Initial]. All authors should be listed in order of authorship.
- ✓ Title [Full article title, including punctuation.]
- ✓ Journal title [Full journal title.]
- ✓ Chronology [Date of journal issue. May include year only; or year, month and day.]
- ✓ Enumeration [Give volume and issue in format 'v. 10(5)' where 10 is the volume number and 5 is the issue number.]
- ✓ Pagination [Give the beginning and ending pages, preceded by 'p.'].]